

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 09037 290756Z  
ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 HEW-06 TRSE-00 /017 W  
-----290759Z 017769 /12  
R 290616Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2619

UNNLAS BEIRUT 9037

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: CFED  
SUBJECT: FEDERAL BENEFIT PROGRAM IN LEBANON

REF: STATE 309883

1. BEIRUT APPRECIATES AND FULLY CONCURS WITH THE POSITION ENUNCIATED IN PARA 3 REFTEL. PRESENT EMBASSY COUNTRY TEAM ARE OF UNANIMOUS OPINION THAT ASSIGNMENT OF ADDITIONAL AMERICAN OFFICERS SHOULD OCCUR NO FASTER THAN GOL'S ABILITY TO ABSORB ASSISTANCE OR PROVIDE GOL COUNTERPARTS IN AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. BEIRUT ALSO HOPES THAT RESTAFFING OF EMBASSY BE TIMELY AND ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE CONSULATIVE PROCESS.

2. THERE FOLLOWS ANSWERS TO QUESTION (A-E) RAISED IN PARA 2 REFTEL.

A. NATIONAL POST SERVICES PARTIALLY RESUMED DISTRIBUTION OF MAIL. HOWEVER, EMBASSY DOES NOT INTEND YET TO MAIL CHECKS TO BENEFICIARIES. ALL CHECKS WILL CONTINUE AT THE PRESENT TIME TO BE HAND DELIVERED AND SIGNED FOR. TELEPHONE SERVICES WERE RESTORED IN MOST AREAS.

B. ALL BENEFICIARIES ARE STILL RESIDING IN LEBANON WITH THE EXCEPTION OF VERY FEW INDIVIDUALS WHO LEFT  
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LEBANON TEMPORARILY (ABOUT 20) OR DECEASED (ABOUT 10). OUT OF 6779 CHECKS SENT BY FEDERAL AGENCIES SINCE OCTOBER 1975 TO DATE, WE RETURNED TO THE DIFFERENT AGENCIES ABOUT 150 CHECKS ADDRESSED TO PERSONS WHO LEFT THE COUNTRY. THESE CHECKS WERE MOSTLY TAX REFUND OR TAX REBATE. WE FORWARDED TO NEARBY EMBASSIES, AT

THEIR REQUEST, SOME FIFTY CHECKS. WE DISTRIBUTED  
ABOUT 6329 CHECKS. WE STILL HAVE ON HAND ABOUT 250

CHECKS.

C. FEDERAL AGENCIES' FILES ARE STILL MAINTAINED IN  
THE CONSULAR SECTION AND ADEQUATE AND SECURE STORAGE FOR  
ANY AMOUNT OF CHECKS IS AVAILABLE.

D. LOCAL STAFF PRESENTLY AT CONSULAR SECTION IS  
SUFFICIENT FOR CHECK DISTRIBUTION AND OTHER SERVICES  
IN CONNECTION WITH COMPLETION OF SS AND VA FORMS.

E. IT IS NOTED THAT SINCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT WAS FORMED  
AND TRAVEL BETWEEN ALL AREAS IN LEBANON BECAME RATHER  
SAFE, A GREAT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES  
COME DAILY TO PICK UP THEIR CHECKS, A FACT WHICH  
LARGELY DECREASED THE NUMBER OF CHECKS ON HAND AT THE  
PRESENT TIME. LOCAL SECURITY SITUATION PERMITS MOST  
BENEFICIARIES TO CALL AT EMBASSY TO PICK UP THEIR  
CHECKS.

3. THE DEPARTMENT IS CORRECT IN IT'S INTERPRETATION  
OF BEIRUT 8635. THE EMBASSY IS REQUESTING FULL RESUMPTION  
OF FEDERAL BENEFIT CHECK DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM IN  
LEBANON. EMBASSY BEIRUT IS SUBMITTING RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR ASSIGNMENT OF CONSULAR OFFICERS IN ORDER TO RESUME  
PARTIAL CONSULAR SERVICES BY THE END OF JANUARY 1977.  
WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE, THE BENEFITS CHECK  
PROGRAM CAN RESUME AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 1977.  
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## Message Attributes

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